



**MINUTES OF THE GILA COUNTY
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Thursday, May 16, 2017
PINE SENIOR CENTER/PINE CULTURAL HALL
3916 State Hwy 87, Pine, AZ
5:30 PM**

SPECIAL MEETING

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Chairman Mickie Nye.
2. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Travis Holder.
3. Roll Call: Robert Gould called the roll; Chairman Mickie Nye, Mary Lou Myers, Travis Holder, Terry Otts, and Randy Slapnicka. Lori Brown and Bill Marshall are absent. A quorum is present.

Community Development Staff Members Present: Robert Gould-Planner and Scott Buzan-Interim Director and Building Official.

4. **Planner/Commission Communication:** At any time during this meeting, The Planning and Zoning Commission and Planner Bob Gould of Community Development may present a brief summary of current events. No action may be taken.

Bob Gould stated that he just wanted to remind the commission that there will be a commission meeting next Thursday with 2 conditional use permits. The meeting will be held at 10:00 am next Thursday morning. Anything else, I can just bring up next week. I don't need to bring it up tonight. Mickie Nye asked if everyone would please put their cell phones on vibrate and also stated that the Commission will open it up and may or may not have any questions, then the visioning committee will make their presentation, then the commission may ask questions back and forth with them, finally it will be opened up to the public. When it is opened up to the public, I just ask that when you get the microphone, you state your name and where you live and I also ask that you just not be redundant.

Public Hearings:

5. **CPA-17-02 Gila County:** An application to amend the Gila County Comprehensive Plan by amending the narrative portion of the Plan for Pine and Strawberry, Arizona. The proposed amendment will provide updated data on the Pine/Strawberry area and provide guidance to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Supervisors in making zoning decisions to manage growth. There will be no changes to the designated planning districts identified in the 2003 Gila County Comprehensive Plan. There is a staff report here, but I want to caution the commission, this staff report is more for when we get involved in the implementation. I don't really have any major issues with the comp. plan as it's written. I do have questions about it and we can deal with that when we get into that discussion. I can't make any recommendations or changes to this document at this time. No Commission member had any questions or concerns at this time, so Mickie Nye opened it up to the visioning committee, after expressing his sincere appreciation for this group of people. Between them and us, I think we have spent 2 or 3 years on this project.

We have spent a lot of time on this and we have worked hand in hand on this, to get it where it is today. I really appreciate the hours and the volunteers that you have put in, so thank you! Chris Walsh stated that this journey did indeed begin 3 years ago, to the day, when they wanted to open a dollar general in Pine and it was decided that a public hearing needed to be held concerning this. The hearing was held in June 2014. The developer backed out, but it was after that hearing that a bunch of us got together and discussed how we can prevent that from happening again. The only way to prevent that from happening in the future is to research and document what it is that our community wants, and then get that in the plan. The first step was for us to get the data. It started with an informal survey. It was brought to our attention that survey wasn't valid. We had to do another survey, which was more formal. We were able to get it in the newspaper, on the radio, in person, and through email. It was in every place in Pine and Strawberry. As a result, we received a 22% participation rate. That is unheard of. That is the highest participation rate of any survey that has ever been done in any Arizona community. Flagstaff had one that reached 21%. So give yourself a hand for caring so much about your community. Our survey matched what the census records have. A concern came up about the difference between the part timers and the full timers and whether that was being reflected. Yes, it was being reflected. We had a 62.7% part-timer participation rate and 37.3% full-timer participation rate, which almost exactly matches the census make-up of our community. Another concern came up about the survey being done by people who have only lived here for a few years. People who have lived here less than 2 years made up 17% of the answers, 2-5 years made up 20%, 5-10 years made up 20% and over 10 years made up 43%. Another question that was part of the survey was, how important is it for our economy to develop and 67% stated it was very or somewhat important and 33% stated it was very or somewhat unimportant. Another part of the survey that was asked was, how important is tourism in our community and 87% stated it was very or somewhat important and 10% stated it was very or somewhat unimportant. This reflects our realization that our economy is based on tourism. In consideration for evaluating any new non-residential development, the top 2 factors that were unimportant were cultural opportunities and employment opportunities. The single most important factor was efficient use of water and some very important factors were light pollution, visual fit with local character, noise pollution and clean air. A future directive question we had on the survey was one concerning being in favor of requiring all new non-residential development to conform to a set of design standards specific to the Pine-Strawberry area and 87% were in favor and 13% were not. We also found that residents were really opposed to brand name retail stores, such as Walmart, Petco, Ross, etc. coming into the area, but were in support of independent non-chain retail stores, lodging/hotel/bed & breakfast, bike/horse rental & outdoor activities, pet services, such as boarding, grooming, and veterinarian, and medical services. Our next step was to figure out how we take this validated data and turn it into guidance and eventually our plan. Stage/Phase 1 was completed, which was data collection and analysis. Darwin and Cheryl took over Stage/Phase 2, which was to develop the actual plan. Darwin Huber stated that Chris Walsh mentioned the names of the people he wanted to thank and The Planning & Zoning Commission was on that list, along with Bob Gould, but I would like to acknowledge Mary Lou Myers, from the commission. We have met with the commission 5 times in the past 3 years and Bob, Mary Lou and myself have sat down and discussed this in detail and I just wanted to thank Mary Lou for her contribution. I am going to be discussing how we formulated our vision statement from all the data that Chris spoke about. The data reflects the changes of the current wants and desires of the community. The data was not only collected from the survey, but from holding 4 public meetings and a couple of public forums. We are looking to update the current vision of the Pine-Strawberry section of the 10 year Gila County Comprehensive Plan. It mainly addresses the

future growth and development. The public's views towards new development mostly centers on retaining the charm and character, protecting the environment, the efficient use of water (which has always been an important element), clean air, maintaining how quiet it is here, historic preservation and traffic flow. Since we started this effort 3 years ago, there have been a number of new businesses that have come to town, such as The Strawberry Inn, Mi Familia, Trident Winery, Old County Inn, and Beeline Guest House. There are also a few that are still under construction, which should be opening next summer. The list of objectives we have is how we plan to get the job done and shows how the plan implements our vision. The objectives being to protect the surrounding forest, maintaining high air quality (by having dust free parking lots), protecting the unique characteristics, preserving precious water resources, promoting local history culture, and mitigating light pollution (by only installing amount of outdoor lighting that is necessary for safety and security). Mary Lou Myers stated that she wanted to thank Chris Walsh and Darwin Huber for all their efforts with this plan. It is a substantial document and you should be very proud of it.

Public comment section opened. Public comment was opened up by a woman (no name given) about her gratitude towards the visioning committee. She also said she wanted to echo what Mary Lou stated. A man (no name given) stated that they need to figure out ways to get more money, people and businesses to the community. Possibly by doing some kind of car or motorcycle show or something to take advantage of the snow they have in the winter, when most people leave. Delphia Strickland agreed and said things were being done. Mickie Nye agreed. Mickie Nye stated that all the commissioners are volunteers and that they represent the county, but don't work for the county. Randy Slapnicka stated that they "the residents in Pine" should be very proud because where he lives, in Christopher Creek, the only time they get together is to tar and feather someone. Everyone should be proud of the fact that they can get together and plan their own destiny. I applaud you for that. Mickie stated that what is neat about the plan, is it gives the commission direction, so we can help you achieve your goals. It was asked if the Dark Skies Ordinance extends to the entire community and not just businesses. Scott Buzan stated that the Dark Sky Ordinance with the county applies to the whole community. It is limited in its scope because it hasn't caught up to such things as LED lighting. It probably needs to be looked at again and modernized. I can add to my to-do list, and get at one of these days. John Rogers asked how this plan was going to be implemented. Mickie Nye stated that he would suspect that if and when a developer would come into town and wanted to develop a piece of property and needs the property to be rezoned, they would need to come before this commission. We would then take this plan into account when we make a decision regarding that business. John asked, "What about the existing non-conforming businesses we already have?" Mickie stated that his understanding is that they would be grandfathered in with the county. Someone spoke up and said there is no grandfather clause because she looked and couldn't find one. Bob Gould stated that yes there is one in the Ordinance. He also stated that there is one for Federal and State. We don't have an option there. If the Federal and State laws say it is grandfathered in, we have to abide by that. John Rogers asked if it was residential and commercial. Bob stated that yes it was both. Cindy Maack stated that she was pretty sure if you went to any of the businesses that weren't conforming and asked them, they would conform. I know I would. Someone asked, to make sure I have this right; there is nothing in these objectives that will stop something like a Dollar General from coming in and developing on private property. Mickie stated that they were correct, but it would allow the commission to sit down and discuss what the building can look like and certain things to take place. The only way to have absolute control in who comes and doesn't come would be to incorporate, but I don't see that happening.

Don't get me wrong, you are legally allowed to do that, but I don't see the community being on board for that. Someone asked if there was a time of discovery, where the community would be able to research and have input. Mickie stated that if the property is already zoned commercial and they bought it, they really don't have to do much. The commission is here to listen to the community. Someone stated that somewhere back East, they were not incorporated, but in their plan, it is stated that they do not want any fast food restaurants and etc., in a sub section of the plan. Someone asked if there was a way to partially incorporate. To do something more informal and not the full-fledged rules. Everyone on the commission is shaking their head no. It would need to include property taxes, town halls, etc. It would need to support everything. Randy Slapnicka stated that incorporation has been discussed before, but because you will be controlled, most are not going to be for it. I think the next objective that needs to be considered is a sewer district. You would be able to grow and control your environment. You would have growth in your own direction. Chris Walsh stated that he feels that a lot of people feel the same way he feels. Part way through this project, knowing that we can't do anything about property that is already zoned commercial, I got discouraged. What kept me going, was knowing most developers and owners do not want to be where they are not wanted. This plan hasn't been in action, but know the survey results of what the community wants has and can be seen. It is in use by the Rim Country Economic Development Group ever since we got the results in. That is what people will see when they look at this area. This is not the final step. This is the first step. We have to have a vision before we can have guidelines and before we can move to the next step. At least we have a vision. Someone asked if there were any design guidelines that had to be followed, even if the zoning is already there for commercial. Mickie Nye stated that yes there is. We can say what it should look like, mandate any lighting and what the parking lot looks like. The comp plan lets us know what the community wants and doesn't want. The commission will respect that and always has. Most developers will look at the comp plan for that county and see what is wanted and what is not wanted, to see if their business will fit in with what is desired. Most developers will want to do what is best for the community as well. Someone asked, what recourse do we have, if they don't. Mickie Nye stated with any existing businesses, the only recourse you would have, is to not do business with them. It was said, that you can't because you have to get everybody on board for that. Mickie said that can be done. Someone stated that they have commercial businesses that aren't even commercial. That they are more industrial. They have chemicals, oils and all kinds of unsafe stuff. Nobody from the county, to date, has shown me on record, in writing, where it says this person isn't allowed to be there commercially. Mickie Nye stated that if he didn't trust the county, he would go to the state. It was stated, that they have gone to the state with this. Mickie stated that if the state isn't going to pursue anything, then who am I. They have the money and legality to do so. Pete White stated that the charm of Pine is why he is there. I am not here to see this town explode commercially and don't want to live there with a bunch of commercial businesses. I think there is a way to keep the charm of Pine. Chris Walsh stated that if anyone sees a developer coming into town and doing something they don't like and approaching the Planning and Zoning Commission, please attend the meetings. That is what makes a difference. Bill Ahrendt stated that he has lived in Pine for 40 years and loves it. My heart is in Pine. If it never changed, I would be perfectly happy with that. We have a lot of people who have worked hard to keep the charm that is here in Pine. Very little has changed in the 40 years that I have lived here. We got a new school house, post office, and maybe a few other buildings, but that's about it. I don't know how many of you agree with my treasured view of Pine, but those are my views. **Public comment section closed.**

Randy Slapnicka motioned that they approve CPA-17-02, an application to amend the Gila County Comprehensive Plan by amending the narrative portion of the Plan for Pine and Strawberry, Arizona. The proposed amendment will provide updated data on the Pine/Strawberry area and provide guidance to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Supervisors in making zoning decisions to manage growth. There will be no changes to the designated planning districts identified in the 2003 Gila County Comprehensive Plan. Mary Lou Myers seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. **Adjournment.** Mary Lou Myers made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Travis Holder seconded the motion. The Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved at 6:34 p.m.